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Letter dated 24 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Joint Declaration of the Regional Initiative on Iraq, which was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 January 2003 with the participation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Turkey, as a host country (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Umit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 24 January 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint Declaration of the Regional Initiative on Iraq

Istanbul, Turkey, 23 January 2003

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Turkey have met today to express our common resolve for attaining a peaceful solution to the Iraqi issue.

The specter of war in Iraq is looming large. The countries of this region do not wish to live through yet another war and all its devastating consequences. War should not become an option to resolve this crisis.

The Iraqi people have suffered most from two consecutive wars and the entire region remains plagued by the resultant political uncertainties and economic contractions ensuing from these wars for over two decades.

We therefore solemnly call on the Iraqi leadership to move irreversibly and sincerely towards assuming their responsibilities in restoring peace and stability in the region.

To this end, we request Iraq to continue cooperation with the UNMOVIC and the IAEA and to demonstrate a more active approach in providing Iraq's inventory of information and material concerning her capabilities of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in full conformity with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, to confirm its commitments under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions regarding ongoing monitoring and verification, to embark on a policy that will unambiguously inspire confidence to Iraq's neighbours, and to respect internationally recognized boundaries in accordance with the existing treaties and agreements and to resolve outstanding issues with Iraq's neighbours, to take firm steps towards national reconciliation that would preserve the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Iraq.

We are fully determined to support the territorial integrity and national unity of Iraq. This determination, coupled with the guarantee contained in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, serves as a solid assurance for the Iraqi people to build a future in security, freedom and prosperity.

The UN Security Council, acting on behalf of the entire United Nations membership in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the UN is entrusted primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council is thus fully seized with the task of determining the state of Iraq's compliance with its resolutions and ensuring their full implementation.

Therefore, the involvement of the UN Security Council in the process must be full, inclusive and persistent. This involvement must also be in full recognition of the need to fulfil the objectives of the ongoing inspections.

The Iraqi issue is a multilateral one, first and foremost affecting the whole region. It is therefore incumbent upon the UN Security Council to act in full recognition of this regional perspective put forth by us. We stand ready to cooperate with the Security Council in its pursuit of a peaceful solution.

We would finally like to reaffirm that the actions to be taken by Iraq will represent a step towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, as stated in UN Security Council resolution 687.

We also remain committed to the peaceful solution of the Palestinian issue and the implementation of all relevant UN resolutions to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

We agree that this initiative in Istanbul by the regional countries is a process that has as its immediate objective the peaceful solution of the crisis in Iraq. Moreover, this initiative will continue until issues in our region are resolved, as well as ensuring peace, security and prosperity for all.

We, the Foreign Ministers of the invited countries, expressed our thanks to the Republic of Turkey for hosting this meeting. We all announce our agreement to convene our next meeting when required in Damascus.